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Question1: GRP easement payment formula made rental agreements more lucrative than easements. This does not allow taxpayer money to go for the best resource gains. Solution: Re-examine the formula for establishing GRP easement payments.

Language describing eligible cover types for enrollment in GRP was vague enough (?natural grasslands?)to allow enrollment of invasive cool-season exotics in eastern states instead of endangered native prairies.

Solution: Define eligible cover types in a manner that prohibits the enrollment of cool-season exotics (i.e. native and restorable prairie) and encourage conversion of exotic pastures currently enrolled in the program

Cropping years for CRP change with each Farm Bill encouraging landowners to enroll cropland, breakout additional land for cropping which will make it eligible for CRP in the next Farm Bill. Solution: Retain the same cropping years for CRP that were used in the 2002 Farm Bill.

Crop insurance and commodity price supports encourage producers to convert native prairie, woodlots and riparian zones to cropping. Once a native prairie is converted, the diversity once present can never be fully restored. Solution: Do not offer crop insurance and counter cyclical payments on acres not farmed since 1985.

Funding levels for WHIP, GRP, FRPP and FLEP are too small to make an impact on the landscape. Solution: Funding for these programs should be increased or targeted.

TA funding for WRP is significantly less than other USDA programs (WRP - 6 - 10%; other USDA programs ? 20-22%) and is disproportionate to some individual state budget contributions. TA is not enough to fund sufficient personnel for administering program without sacrificing other USDA program budgets or not administering WRP to match public demand. Solution: Increase TA funding for WRP.

WRP easement formula was re-tooled in 2005 (FY 2006) to utilize the geographic caps using NASS figures as outlined in ?Farm and Land in Farms Estimated Market Value of Land and Buildings, Average per acre (dollars)?. This information is outdated (2002) and was developed from landowners located in the county and not from independent parties for land worth. The information is too old to represent recent land value increases and unfairly includes buildings/ structures not typically allowed on WRP easements as part of the lands overall fair market worth. Solution: Develop land values from independent parties ? do not include building /structures in fair market value.

Question2: Target crops, which will lose price subsidies under WTO

lawsuits, with CSP to retain income stream and improve natural resource stewardship.

Question3: Fully fund conservation programs as legislated by Congress

Question4: Retain current 2002 Farm Bill Conservation Programs in the 2007 Farm Bill with at least the same level of funding.

Carbon sequestration has gained popularity in achieving landowner programmatic goals (tree/ herbaceous planting, tree/herbaceous enhancement, tree/herbaceous protection) and allowing certain levels of domestic and foreign investment opportunities. The value of carbon sequestration is similar to ?banking? where the loss somewhere is offset by an equal or greater gain elsewhere. The carbon sequestration process is too vague and convoluted as to what resources are being ?banked? for the losses elsewhere either locally or globally. The process needs sideboards and discussion on what types of resources and where these resources are located before the sequestration process can be put forth with tangible and measurable gains. Local, not global emphasis should be featured for losses and gains to be measurable and tangible. Carbon sequestration goals must be met in ways that enhance or are compatible with other natural resource needs, such as wildlife.

USDA programs should be based on ranking systems that exhibit and utilize ?good science? formats (BMPs, Natural Heritage database inferences, HEPs, NBCI, etc) to best address gains in conservation and environmental goals. USDA needs to prioritize wildlife specie(s) and ecosystem approaches on a national, regional or state (local), such as the Wildlife Action Plans/Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy developed by each state to match the set of conservation and environmental goals as per USDA program. This may also assist in obligating moneys more equitable among the states involved in each USDA program.

Not enough money has been allotted to monitor USDA program progress or impacts based on the conservation or environmental goals assumed within the Farm Bill. The wise use of these moneys is in constant question while measurement of its? progress is almost non-existent. The measurement of impacts of conservation or environmental programs cannot be adequate without the use of a set of environmental indices designed and accepted by the scientific community. Justification to Congress for continued financial support of certain USDA programs can not continue without a significant monitoring device in place. USDA should fund monitoring and not rely on budget strapped state agencies to develop their own funding mechanisms.

Develop a more focused PIK which would target areas of state conservation emphasis.

Forestry programs should:

- Target educational, technical and financial assistance addressing priority societal resource concerns while meeting landowner objectives.
- Implement a landscape approach in assistance programs so investments in family forestland make a difference on the landscape scale.
- Integrate assistance programs to address a broader national strategy for family forest conservation will locally identified priorities.
- Monitor and evaluate programs to show improvements on the ground and how these efforts are meeting stated goals and objectives.
- Continue scientific advances and their application from universities, agencies, and other partners that help continue good stewardship and economic benefits from family forests.

Question5:

Question6: Encourage new partnerships to work together to develop market-based incentives for conservation. Current examples are cooperatives which promote and market grass-fed beef or conservation-branded beef. With the loss of state budgets for sustainable agriculture programs there is an increased need to assist the formation of such enterprises.

Use market-based approaches to forest conservation that allow for both public and private investment in public goods and from family forests.